

ORDINARY FAITHFULNESS

WHEN GOD'S PLAN COMES TOGETHER

ROMANS 8:28

Understanding Romans 8:28

Romans 8:28 NKJV 28 And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.

- Romans 8:28 is one of the most beautiful verses in all of Scripture, but it also one of the most *misunderstood and misinterpreted* verses in all of Scripture, too
- Paul was writing to believers living in Rome
- The context of Romans 8:28 sits inside a larger section where Paul speaks about:
 - Present suffering (vv. 18–25)
 - The Spirit's help in weakness (vv. 26–27)
 - God's eternal purpose (vv. 29–30)
- Paul is speaking to people who are:
 - Saved
 - Struggling
 - Waiting
 - Enduring suffering
- Romans 8:28 can be broken down into smaller phrases to help our understanding:
- *And we know* - settled and confident knowledge
 - we are convinced
- *that all things work together* – all mean ALL, no exclusions or exceptions
 - working together means to cooperate, to *synergize*
 - That doesn't mean all things *are good*, but it does mean all things are working together
- *for good* – does not mean comfort, wealth, or ease
 - It means *conformity* into the image of Christ **Romans 8:29 “For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, ...”**
- *to those who love God*, speaks of our ongoing relationship with God
 - Biblically, loving God means:
 - A relationship with Him
 - A heart turned toward Him
 - A life oriented around Him
 - Jesus makes this clear in **John 14:15 “If you love Me, keep My commandments.”**
- *to those who are the called* – those who have answered God's call for salvation
 - The called are those who:
 - Have responded to God's call
 - Have been saved
 - Are now part of His redemptive plan
- *according to His purpose* – God's plan
 - This means God didn't save you “randomly” and God didn't call you “accidentally”
- The people who can stand on Romans 8:28 are the people who are in *relationship* with God and *walking in* His purpose.
- This verse is your *assurance* that God is actively working in your life
- Romans 8:28 is not just a promise to be quoted, it's a promise to be lived by for *everyone* who belongs to God

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The Things that God Brought Together

A Famine That Forced Movement

Ruth 1:1-2 Now it came to pass in the days when the judges ruled, that there was a famine in the land. And a certain man of Bethlehemjudah went to sojourn in the country of Moab, he, and his wife, and his two sons. 2 And the name of the man was Elimelech, and the name of his wife Naomi, and the name of his two sons Mahlon and Chilion, Ephrathites of Bethlehemjudah. And they came into the country of Moab, and continued there.

- A famine hits Bethlehem, the house of bread
- Elimelech moves his family to Moab, a questionable decision spiritually and culturally.
- What looked like bad circumstances became the setup for divine connection.
- **Romans 8:28 insight:** God can use disruptions to reposition us for destiny

Death That Created Emptiness

Ruth 1:3-5 And Elimelech Naomi's husband died; and she was left, and her two sons. 4 And they took them wives of the women of Moab; the name of the one was Orpah, and the name of the other Ruth: and they dwelled there about ten years. 5 And Mahlon and Chilion died also both of them; and the woman was left of her two sons and her husband.

- Elimelech dies and Mahlon and Chilion die.
- Naomi is left with two Moabite daughters-in-law
- These women are overwhelmed with sorrow, they have no male defense or support, and they're forced to live in poverty and are vulnerable to attack or exploitation to survive
- But the emptiness created space for God to write a new story
- If there is no famine:
 - There is no move
 - If there is no move
 - There is no Ruth
- We have had similar experiences
- You thought it was breaking you, but God was positioning you.
- **Romans 8:28 insight:** Pain was not the "end", it was the *entry point* into God's plan.

A Daughter-in-Law's Radical Commitment

Ruth 1:16-17 And Ruth said, Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: 17 Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the LORD do so to me, and more also, if ought but death part thee and me.

- Ruth chooses Naomi over her homeland, her gods, and her future security
- This is covenant loyalty, a decision that aligns her with God's people.
- Ruth's decision aligned her with destiny.
- One decision can shift your entire future.

Romans 8:28 insight: God works through faith-filled decisions, not just circumstances.

A "Chance" Encounter in the Field

Ruth 2:3 And she went, and came, and gleaned in the field after the reapers: and her hap was to light on a part of the field belonging unto Boaz, who was of the kindred of Elimelech.

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- Ruth “happened” to come to the part of the field belonging to Boaz...
- There are no accidents in the life of a believer.
- From our perspective it's a coincidence.
- From God's perspective it's divine providence.
- Boaz just “happens” to be:
 - A relative
 - A godly man
 - A redeemer
 - God's providence will allow you to meet the right person at the right time, the right opportunity come your way, to make the right connection
 - You didn't just 'end up there', God ordered your steps
 - **Romans 8:28 insight:** What looks “accidental” is often *divinely orchestrated*

Favor That Opened Doors

Ruth 2:8–16

- Boaz shows unusual kindness and protection to Ruth.
- Boaz gave Ruth unusual favor: she didn't have to glean from field to field, he gave her extra grain, protection from the men in the field, water when she was thirsty, recognized her loyalty to Naomi, let Ruth glean among the sheaves, not just the scraps of grain
- Ruth moves from survival to favor
- God will give uncommon favor with people at work

Romans 8:28 insight: God uses people as instruments of His purpose.

Wise Counsel That Directed the Moment

Ruth 3

- Naomi gives Ruth a bold, strategic plan.
- The time of the harvest was about over, which means the generosity of Boaz was coming to an end
- Naomi realizes the harvest season is coming to an end
- Naomi wants Ruth to have rest and security
- Ruth didn't have stability or rest because she was a widowed foreigner living in Bethlehem
- Naomi knows that Boaz is more than a kind land owner; he's a kinsman-redeemer
- Naomi comes up with a plan for Ruth to approach Boaz to exercise his responsibilities as her kinsman-redeemer
 - Naomi tells Ruth to *prepare herself*
 - Boaz will be at the threshing floor, winnowing barley
 - When Boaz lies down on the threshing floor, take notice of where he is
 - Uncover his feet
 - Boaz will tell you what to do
- This is risky
- Walking by faith can sometimes seem risky, but walking by faith never means doing nothing
- Ruth tells Naomi, I'm going to do everything you said to me
- Ruth approaches Boaz at the threshing floor.
- Ruth waits for Boaz to finish eating and drinking and fall asleep near the harvested grain

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- Ruth quietly came to the threshing floor where Boaz was, and she uncovered his feet and lay down at his feet
- Ruth is at the threshing floor to claim a right; Boaz is her kinsman-redeemer
- At midnight, Ruth uncovers Boaz's feet and lays at his feet and it startles Boaz
- Ruth says, "I am Ruth, your maidservant. Take your maidservant under your wing, for you are a close relative."
- Take your maidservant under your wing, be my protective covering
- Ruth is asking Boaz to be her kinsman-redeemer, her source of protection, her husband, her source of inheritance
- Boaz said, "I will do for you all that you request, I'll be your kinsman-redeemer, 'I am willing to redeem you and take responsibility for your future.'"
- Even though Boaz is a close relative and could be a kinsman-redeemer and marry Ruth, he reveals that there is *another* kinsman-redeemer that's a closer relation to her late father in law, Elimelech
- This moment could have gone wrong, but it becomes a turning point.
- **Romans 8:28 insight:** God uses godly wisdom and timing to bring His plan to fruition

A Legal Process That Secured Redemption

Ruth 4:1–12

- Boaz goes to the city gate.
- He "happens" to see the other closer kinsman
- The closer kinsman agrees to buy the land
- A closer kinsman declines.
- Boaz tells the closer kinsman that if he redeems the land, he must also redeem Ruth
- The closer kinsman backs out the arrangement because it would affect his personal inheritance
- Boaz publicly and legally redeems Ruth
- What could have been an obstacle (another redeemer) becomes part of the process.
- **Romans 8:28 insight:** Even delays and complications serve God's plan.

A Birth That Connected to a Bigger Story

Ruth 4:13–17

- Boaz redeems Ruth publicly
- Boaz marries Ruth
- They have a son: Obed
- And from Obed, to Jesse, to David, to Jesus
- God's plan was never just about Ruth, it was about redemption for the world.
- Ruth (a Moabite widow) becomes part of the lineage of King David.....and ultimately, **Jesus Christ**.
- The book of Ruth looks like a bunch of random, isolated events, but they changed her life and changed the world when we put them all together
- God is doing more than fixing your situation
- He is fulfilling a bigger purpose through your life
- Your story is connected to something greater than you.

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- “God didn’t just bring you out, He’s using your life to bring somebody else in!”
- **Romans 8:28 insight:** God’s purpose is always bigger than the immediate outcome.
- Application for us:
 - Stop labeling seasons too early, God is still working.
 - Your “random” connections may be divine appointments.
 - Faithfulness in small decisions unlocks big outcomes.
- It will all work together for good in your life

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